

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-10 SAB-01 ACDA-05 OPR-02 SY-05

OC-05 CCO-00 CAB-02 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 FAA-00

FEAE-00 OES-03 TRSE-00 CG-00 SCCT-01 /104 W

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O P 291415Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6433

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LOPDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PREORITY

USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 12085

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: CEASEFIRE STILL HOLDS; "DIALOGUE" RECONVENES TODAY

REF: BEIRUT 12041; BEIRUT 12043

1. SUMMARY: BEIRUT SECURITY CONTINUES TO IMPROVE, BUT MANY BUSINESSES REMAIN CLOSED AS OWNERS FEAR FURTHER OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE. THE ARMY HAS ASSUMED CHARGE OF SECURITY IN THE COMMERCIAL AREAS. A TREND IS DISCERNIBLE TOWARD DIVISION OF CITY'S SECURITY ENFORCEMENT AMONG INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES, ARMY, AND PLO. THE "NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE" HOLDS ITS SECOND SESSION TODAY, SEPT 29, AMID WRANGLES OVER PROPER REPRESENTATION OF GROUPS WITHIN IT. END SUMMARY.

2. A CONTINUING SLOW IMPROVEMENT IN THE BEIRUT SECURITY SCENE KEEPS HOPES HIGH THAT ROUND 4 WILL SOON CEASE. ALTHOUGH A FEW AREAS OF THE CITY REMAIN UNSTABLE AND SNIPERS STILL HARASS SOME STREETS, TRAFFIC SEPT 29 IS UP CONSIDERABLY. GAS STATIONS APPEAR TO HAVE MORE ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF GAS. THERE IS MODERATE TRAFFIC ON THE AIRPORT ROAD AND AN UPBEAT IN OPERATIONS AT THE AIRPORT WHERE THE JET FUEL PROBLEM IS IMPROVING. PASSENGER TRAFFIC AT AIRPORT IS REPORTEDLY ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF NORMAL.

3. COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS ARE GRADUALLY OPENING IN THE CITY. MANY MERCHANTS, HOWEVER, FEAR A FURTHER BREAKDOWN IN SECURITY AND ARE ADOPTING A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE. PORT REMAINS CLOSED BECAUSE FEW EMPLOYEES HAVE RESPONDED TO APPEAL TO RETURN TO WORK. THERE IS A MOVEMENT AMONG MERCHANTS, SECONDED BY SOME LABOR LEADERS, TO USE CONTINUED COMMERCIAL SHUTDOWN AS LEVER ON THE AUTHORITIES TO FORCE MAXIMUM EFFORT TOWARD FULL SECURITY. A MEETING OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IS TAKING PLACE TODAY, SEPT 29, TO DEBATE THIS APPROACH. ODDS NOW ARE THAT THE CHAMBER WILL URGE MOST BUSINESSES AND BANKS TO OPEN TOMORROW AND THAT THE LABOR UNIONS WILL GO ALONG WITH THIS DECISION. FOR ONE THING, END OF MONTH MEANS PAYROLLS HAVE TO BE MET.

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4. THE ARMY HAS TAKEN OVER SECURITY ENFORCEMENT IN THE COMMERCIAL AREAS OF BEIRUT, LEAVING OTHER AREAS TO THE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES AND TO THE PLO. A TREND TOWARD DIVISION OF THE CITY AMONG THESE THREE ELEMENTS IS DISCERNIBLE; THE PLO IS VERY EVIDENT AS SECURITY ENFORCERS IN PARTS OF WEST BEIRUT, WHERE MANY FOREIGNERS LIVE. LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THIS FURTHER EXTENSION OF PLO INFLUENCE IN THE CAPITAL HAS NOT YET DAWNED ON MANY LEBANESE, HOWEVER.

5. BEKAA VALLEY IS APPARENTLY QUIET, BUT ALL IS NOT YET CALM IN NORTH LEBANON. WE HAVE NO DETAILS OF CONTINUING MOSLEM-CHRISTIAN TENSION AROUND ZGHORTA, BUT VAS NOT YET BEEN PUT TO REST. PRESENT INDICATIONS, ARE THAT IT IS CONTROLLABLE BY ARMY ON THE SCENE. THE PHALANGE-PPS CLASH IN METN REGION NEAR BEIRUT, REPORTED EARLIER, ALSO CONTINUES AS AN ISOLATED AND HOPEFULLY CONTAINABLE BATTLE.

6. THE LONG-AWAITED SECOND SESSION OF THE "NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE" IS BEING HELD TODAY. THE PIQUE OF CONSERVATIVE SHIA LEADERS, PARTICULARLY SABRI HAMADE AND PARLIAMENT SPEAKER KAMEL AL-ASSAD, OVER ALLEGED UNDER-REPRESENTATION ON THE COMMITTEE IS EMERGING AS POTENTIALLY THE FIRST MAJOR CONTROVERSY. MINISTER OSSEIRAN, WHO WAS NOT AS WE ORIGINALLY SPECULATED OMITTED FOR HEALTH REASONS, IS JOINING IN AGITATION AMONG SHIITE "OUTSIDERS." HAMADE HELD A MEETING OF SHIITES IN THE BEKAA VALLEY SEPT 28 AND DISPLAYED HIS ANGER. SPEAKER ASSAD IS CONTINUING HIS BOYCOTT OF THE COMMITTEE. IMAM MUSA SADR'S RADICAL WING OF SHIITES, ON THE OTHER HAND, APPARENTLY FEEL WELL ENOUGH REPRESENTED AND ARE NOT LIKELY TO GO ALONG WITH THE BOYCOTT, DESPITE THE PRESSURE FACED BY SHIITES IN GENERAL FROM THE CAMPAIGN OF THE CONSERVATIVES. MEANWHILE, KARAME IS REPORTEDLY TRYING TO EXPAND THE COMMITTEE TO MEET THE OBJECTIONS OF ASSAD AND HAMADE, AND LIKEWISE THOSE OF DEPUTY SKAFF (CHRISTIAN OF ZAHLE) BUT THIS MOVE IS ADAMANTLY OPPOSED BY JUMBLATT'S LEFTISTS. EXPANDING THE GROUP WHILE PRESERVING CONFESSIONAL BALANCE AND AT THE SAME TIME KEEPING ITS NUMBER MANAGEABLE WOULD BE A TOUGH JOB IN ANY CASE.

7. SIMILAR BUT LESS PRESSING DISSATISFACTIONS OVER REPRESENTATION HAS BEEN SHOWN BY OTHER GROUPS. CHIEF AMONG THESE IS CONFIDENTIAL

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THE ABSENCE OF TONY FRANGIE, WHICH HAS REPORTEDLY IRKED PRES FRANGIE AND HIS ZGHORTA FOLLOWING.

8. BEYOND THIS IMMEDIATE ARGUMENT, OF COURSE, IES#THE NUMEROUS INTRACTABLE PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL POLICY THAT THE COMMITTEE IS SUPPOSED TO ADDRESS/ THE AGENDA OF TODAY'S SESSION HAS BEEN LEFT OPEN-ENDED, WITH PARTICIPANTS MERELY ASKED TO SUBMIT IDEAS. WHEN DIFFERENT PROGRAMS ARE PRESENTED, A MORE CONCRETE AGENDA MAY EMERGE FOR SUBSEQUENT SESSIONS. NO SIGN OF GIVE ON THE PART OF EITHER PHALANGISTS OR LEFTISTS OVER THEIR WIDELY DIVERGENT POSITIONS IS EVIDENT. ONE EARLY CRISIS POINT IS LIKELY TO BE GEMAYEL'S COONTINUING INSISTENCE UPON INTRODUCING THE TABOO QUESTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE INTO THE PROCEEDINGS. WHILE MODERATING INFLUENCES WILL NO DOUBT

SEEK TO FORGE A COMPROMISE, THE POSSIBILITY OF FAILURE IS OPENLY
TALKED ABOUT BY SKEPTICAL BEIRUTIS WHO HAVE SEEN SUCH "DIA-
LOGUES" AMONG POLITICIANS BEFORE.
GODLEY

NOTE BY OC/T: TEXT AS RECEIVED.

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